

2021 SAMHSA SOAR OCTOBER E-NEWS

Reporting is in! SOAR 2021 Outcomes

The fiscal year 2021 SOAR outcomes are in, and we are amazed and proud that so many people were assisted by SOAR providers during this incredibly difficult year! We are grateful to the practitioners who continued to work through the pandemic and those that stretched their comfort zones in using new virtual technologies to make it happen. Nearly 4,000 individuals were approved for benefits last year, even though Social Security Administration (SSA) offices have been closed, SSA and Disability Determination Services (DDS) offices are facing staff shortages, and access to treatment appointments and consultative exams have been limited or virtual. **The national cumulative approval rate on SOAR-assisted Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications remains at 65 percent, and there are now 59,153 people receiving benefits because of SOAR.**

We are excited to celebrate the top 10 states this year with an average cumulative approval rate of 79 percent. The top states, in order, are Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Maryland, Arkansas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia, Washington, DC, Oregon, and Kansas. Stay tuned next month for our forthcoming 2021 SOAR Outcomes Issue Brief for a complete reporting of SOAR success across the country. For now, check out our 2021 Outcomes Infographic for our national impact.



[Download the 2021 Outcomes](#)

Build Your SOAR Toolbox: New SOAR Resources Available in Spanish

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center strives to make our tools and resources accessible to all, so that eligible individuals can benefit from the SOAR process. In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, we are proud to release our first suite of SOAR resources translated into Spanish! Included in the suite are the following:

- Alcance, Acceso y Rehabilitación de SSI/SSDI: una Descripción General (SSI/SSDI Outreach Access, and Recovery: An Overview)
- Elegibilidad de SOAR: Árbol de Decisión (SOAR Eligibility: Decision Tree)
- Si, Usted Puede Trabajar (Yes, You Can Work)
- Pasos para llenar una solicitud de SSI/SSDI usando el modelo SOAR (Steps to Completing an SSI/SSDI Application Using the SOAR Model)
- Identificación de los solicitantes de SOAR (Identifying SOAR Applicants)
- SSI para niños (SSI for Children: Information Sheets)

Visit our [Spanish Translations](#) page to download these tools and resources for Spanish speakers. Both caseworkers and beneficiaries can discover more about SOAR. We encourage you to share these resources so that Spanish-speaking individuals can learn more about how SOAR works in their communities!

Is there a resource you would like to see translated into Spanish? Let your [SOAR Liaison](#) know!

See How SOAR Works

NEW Webinar: Employment Supports and Benefits Planning for SOAR Beneficiaries

October 26, 2021, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)! The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is proud to take part again this year by hosting a webinar on employment for individuals with disabilities who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. This webinar will explore myth-busting facts about working while receiving SSA benefits. Presenters will provide basic information on SSA's work incentives, particularly the Ticket to Work Program and Employment Networks, and how to access these employment resources in your community.

[Register for the Webinar](#)

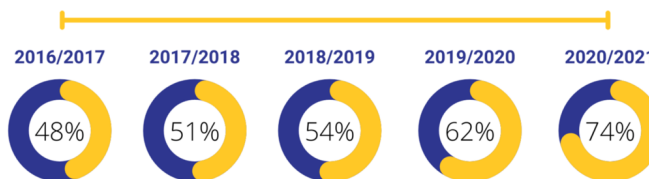
SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls

October 19, 2021, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET

[Add SOARing Over Lunch to Your Calendar](#)



See How Kansas's Approval Rates Have Grown!



Community Spotlight: Success in Kansas

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is proud to highlight the fantastic progress made by SOAR caseworkers, Local Leads, and the State Team Lead in Kansas! In outcomes reporting for fiscal year 2021, the SOAR leadership team in Kansas implemented some creative and effective strategies for improving state outcomes. This initiative led to obtaining a 74% approval rate on initial applications in 2021, a 21% increase over the prior year!

- These changes began when state leads presented and sought feedback at the Kansas State Behavioral Health Conference in September 2020. The leadership team presented on the importance of SOAR and were able to get an understanding of the needs around the state, as well as determine which agencies were open to filling SOAR caseworker positions.
- To support Local Leads and caseworkers, state leadership started using a planning platform called Basecamp. This is a 24/7 platform in which anyone across the state can ask questions and get answers from peers, Local Leads, the State Lead, and the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison for any problems they may have. This offers a personal level of assistance and has aided in building a state team approach.
- Local leads host quarterly statewide meetings to provide targeted trainings. Meetings cover all aspects of the SOAR process and include Q&A sessions and guest speakers from SSA and DDS partners.

With these combined strategies, Kansas providers were able to drastically improve outcomes without reducing the volume of applicants served. Please reach out to your SAMHSA SOAR TA Center Liaison for more information on how you can improve outcomes and expand SOAR in your state or community!



Meet Your New Local Leads

From August 10-12, 2021, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center facilitated a virtual SOAR Leadership Academy. There were 15 participants representing 12 states (CA, CT, FL, IL, KS, MA, MD, NH, NJ, NM, OR, and TX). The new Local Leads expressed their excitement to put their strengths to use to bolster SOAR in their communities. Some of these strengths include:

- Knowledge of diverse populations
- Knowledge of homelessness
- Ability to build relationships
- An understanding of state funding resources
- Motivational interviewing skills
- Bilingual skills
- Diverse service backgrounds
- Experience as a disability examiner
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Ability to understand a client's barriers
- Strong community ties
- Experience in healthcare and mental health

Interested in Becoming a SOAR Local Lead

Application Tip! Using SSA's Consent to Release Information

The [SSA-3288 Consent to Release of Information](#) is an optional form that will help you verify if an applicant has a pending SSI/SSDI application. It can also be used to request records about prior SSI/SSDI applications. Knowing information about an applicant's past interactions with SSA can help to strengthen their current claim! Complete and submit this form to SSA, or [call your local SSA office](#) while with the applicant.

SSA Updates

SSA Forms Available for Online Submission

SSA has updated its website with several forms that can now be completed and submitted online. The newest forms available for online submission are the following:

- [SSA-820](#)—Work Activity Report (Self-Employed Person)—Provides SSA with work activity information for self-employed individuals applying for or receiving disability benefits.
- [SSA-821](#)—Work Activity Report—Provides SSA with work activity information for individuals applying for or receiving disability benefits.
- [SSA HA-85](#)—Request to Withdraw a Hearing Request—Requests to withdraw an existing hearing request.
- [SSA-455](#)—Disability Update Report—Provides information to determine if a beneficiary is still disabled.

SSA Has Updated Its Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Page

SSA has updated the following information available on their COVID-19 web page:

- Economic Impact Payments—[Will a Child Tax Credit \(CTC\) payment affect my Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\) eligibility or payment amount?](#)

Social Security Services for the Hispanic Community

Explore resources on [SSA's Spanish-language website](#) and other publications in Spanish.

SOAR Jobs

Maryland: The Office on Mental Health Core Service Agency of Harford County, Inc., is seeking a full-time SOAR Specialist in Bel Air, Maryland.

Nebraska: Community Action Partnership of Western Nebraska is seeking a full-time SOAR case manager to assist individuals apply for Social Security disability benefits in Gering, Nebraska.

New York: Partners Ending Homelessness is seeking a full-time SOAR benefits specialist to help individuals in Rochester, New York.

Texas: IntegralCare is seeking a full-time SOAR specialist based in Austin, Texas.

Learn more about these positions on the [SOARWorks website](#). Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Please submit it to the [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center](#)!



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Disclaimer: The SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sending this eNews with support from SAMHSA, HHS. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of HHS or SAMHSA.

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